

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Islām's Prohibition of Taking Lives Unjustly and Causing Fear in the Earth

From the *Tafsīr* of al-*Allāmah* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Nāṣir al-Sa’dī

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Relating the story of the Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام, Allāh ﷻ says in His Noble Book:

وَدَخَلَ الْمَدِينَةَ عَلَى حِينٍ غَفْلَةٍ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا فَوَجَدَ فِيهَا رَجُلَيْنِ
يَقْتُلَانِ هَذَا مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ وَهَذَا مِنْ عَدُوِّهِ فَاسْتَغْنَى الَّذِي مِنْ
شِيعَتِهِ عَلَى الَّذِي مِنْ عَدُوِّهِ فَوَكَرَهُ مُوسَى فَقَضَى عَلَيْهِ قَالَ هَذَا مِنْ
عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ مُضِلٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٥﴾

“And he entered the city at a time of inattention by its people and found therein two men fighting: one from his faction and one from among his enemy. And the one from his faction called for help to him against the one from his enemy, so Mūsā struck him and [unintentionally] killed him. [Mūsā] said, ‘This is from the work of Satan. Indeed, he is a manifest, misleading enemy.’

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي فَاغْفِرْ لِي فَغَفَرَهُ إِنَّكَ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ
الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٦﴾

He said, ‘My Lord, indeed I have wronged myself, so forgive me,’ and He forgave him. Indeed, He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.” [al-Qaṣaṣ 28:15-16]

Until the verse:

فَلَمَّا أَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَبْطِشَ بِالَّذِي هُوَ عَدُوٌّ لَهُمَا قَالَ يَمْوَسَّى أَتُرِيدُ أَنْ
تَقْتُلَنِي كَمَا قَتَلْتَ نَفْسًا يَوْمَ الْأَمْسِ إِنْ تُرِيدُ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ جَبَّارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَمَا تُرِيدُ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْمَصْلُوحِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

“And when he wanted to strike the one who was an enemy to both of them, he said, ‘O Mūsā, do you intend to kill me as you killed someone yesterday? You only want to be a tyrant in the land and do not want to be of the amenders.’” [al-Qaṣaṣ 28:19]

In his *Tafsīr* [commentary] of these verses, *al-Allāmah* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Nāṣir al-Sa’dī (رحمه الله) says: “And from them (i.e. the benefits of these verses): The killing of a non-Muslim who has a compact [of security] by treaty or customary law is impermissible,¹ for indeed Mūsā عليه السلام considered his killing of the disbelieving Copt a sin, and he sought Allāh's ﷻ Forgiveness for it.

Also from them: Whoever takes a life unjustly is considered from the oppressors, those who cause corruption in the earth.

And from them: Whoever takes a life unjustly and claims that he desires to rectify the land and to cause fear in the people of sin, then he is indeed a liar in this [claim] and is instead one who causes corruption, just as Allāh ﷻ has related in the Copt's statement (**You only want to be a tyrant in the land and do not want to be of the amenders**) by way of affirmation, not negation.”²



¹ This has also been explicitly stated by the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ in the ḥadīth collected by Imām al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* (no. 2929 and 6524) on the authority of ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Amr ؓ who related that Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: “Whoever killed a *Mu'ahid* (a non-Muslim who is under the pledge of protection by the Muslims) will not smell the fragrance of Paradise though its fragrance can be smelled at a distance of forty years (of traveling).”

² *Taysīr al-Karīm al-Raḥmān* (pg. 678)